Unlike her fellow mates at school and college, Luva had very encouraging parents who were always supportive of her schooling and career decisions. "My mother, who recently retired, was a school teacher and was always serious about my schooling," she says. "I was always an only child and hardly faced any kind of problems at home regarding my education or the other activities that I was always involved in."

However, living in a four-walled society, does put thoughts into the minds of confident women. "I think men simply do not know how to deal with women," she explains. "Most of them are still not used to women working with them in the same office, how to handle a situation where a woman colleague is involved or how to respond to a journalist who simply happens to be a woman."

It is up to the woman to make her position prominent in society and to build her own platform with the limited resources that she has.

According to Luva, it is up to the woman to make her position prominent in society and to build her own platform with the limited resources that she has. "Today every other man on the street is used to seeing women coming out of their factories after office hours and walking home," she adds, "Even a few years ago, this was not the case. There were a lot of women getting eve teased or mentally tortured on the streets which would keep most of them away stuck at home. However, the more women come out today, the more accustomed men become to them."

Luva mentions the many women who work in her office. "We have had situations where a young journalist had gone to cover an assignment and her mother would be worried the whole time, calling the office every now and then trying to figure out what is going on," she says. "We have had women working on reports at the office with very disappointed husbands waiting at home. However, these hurdles did not stop them from doing their jobs. They, in turn, went on with what they had in mind and tried to balance out their lives at home as well."

One should know what one is worth, says Luva. "Every woman should realise what her potential is and work on it accordingly," she says. "If you want to speak your mind and show the world what you are underneath all your so called frailty, then you cannot depend on others to provide you with all the luxury. You have to earn it yourself."

"All women need is an agreeable environment"

--Shumana Sharmin

Shumana Sharmin decided on her future course at an early age. She was a student of class nine when she came to the realisation that her métier was in the field of journalism. "I was weak in math and it helped me to decide on my career much early on. My father Dr Shakhawat Ali worked as a journalist before finally taking up the profession of teaching; as a child that had an influence on me," says Shumana.

Her career in journalism was launched in 1991 by way of joining as a sub-editor at the reporters' desk in the daily Ajker Kagoj. In 1992 she joined the then newly launched daily Bhorer Kagoj. Two years went by working at the reporters' desk, and then came a proposition from the editor to start a weekly supplementary page solely for women. "My spirit sagged; I thought after graduating from the journalism department and working as sub-editor for years, I was being relegated to the 'in-charge' of a supplement that would cater only to women," Shumana recalls her reaction to the scheme. But her mentor as well as the editor of Bhorer Kagoj Matiur Rahman pesuaded